

March 18, 2020

Hello friends,

You are all probably aware by now that each group session at Stephy's Place begins with the daily reflection taken from "Grief One Day at a Time" by Dr. Alan Wolfelt. More times than not, I find that the daily reflection speaks to me personally, and always to at least a few people in each group. I think today's reflection can be a timely and spot on support to us during this time of "social distancing." The last thing we want to do during this time is to completely isolate ourselves from those who care about us. Dr. Wolfelt begins today's reflection with a quote from Maya Angelo, "*The first time someone shows you who they are, believe them.*" He goes on to say, "Not everyone is cut out to be a good friend in grief. You've probably learned this already. People you would have expected to support you fall out of touch, while others you never imagined would support you do. One way to respond in the face of faltering friendships is to be proactive and honest. Even though we're the ones who are grieving, we may need to be the ones to phone our friends and keep in touch. When we do speak, let's be honest. Let's tell our friends how we're really and truly feeling and that we appreciate their support. When we find that certain friends can't handle our 'grief talk' we can stick to lighter topics with them and lean more heavily on the friends who can support us in our grief. Some friends will fall away permanently; others will step away for a time then return. That is life. We are all fluid beings who never stop becoming. Knowing this, we can respond with grace."

When I read today's reflection with all of you in mind, I knew it was no coincidence. I am sure I will be quoting from our friend, Dr. Wolfelt in many of these emails during this time of hiatus and solitude. But too much solitude can possibly make us too isolated, and we don't want to fall into that trap. One of the things that makes what we do at Stephy's Place work is that we encourage each and every group to become a small community in and of itself. Human beings are meant to live within community of some kind; we are not created to be alone. Community is an essential element in human development and in civilization itself. Our friends and family are our most immediate and important community, so it is essential to try to keep in touch with them now more than ever, even if sometimes we need to take the initiative. In our grief we may start to believe that people don't care about us, but that is the 'stinkin thinkin' that comes from grief. Let's not push everyone away assuming they don't care, we just need to put ourselves on their radar from time to time. These are times in which people can become very preoccupied, so let's not allow that to push us into deeper isolation. But, we may have needs beyond that initial community. Certainly our groups at Stephy's Place have such potential and quite often do in fact become little communities. And I believe our groups are infused with God's loving presence. In fact I believe with all my heart that this is the fuel that keeps Stephy's Place going (and donations of course! LOL) Let's try to stay in touch with those around us who are, or can be, nurturing to us, and perhaps allow ourselves to be nurturing to another during this time of painful separation. Even though we can't physically touch during this time, let's keep in touch!